

JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

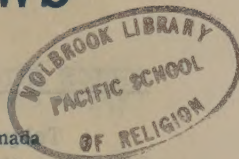
Chairman

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"LABOR AND LEISURE" IS CHRISTIAN MAY DAY THEME

The Kyodan's Occupational Evangelism Committee has exhorted Japanese workers to view both leisure-time and work activities as part of an integrated effort to achieve dignity and the better life.

The Committee statement--to be released the Sunday before May Day as the Kyodan's Message to Labor--also cautioned workers against the "quick thrill" philosophy underlying many of Japan's present leisure-time practices. Leisure, the Committee believes, should serve to renew and refresh the human spirit and body. Shorter working hours can best be devoted to cultural and educational pursuits that enrich the worker's life.

Vietnam, living costs, and union consolidation were also issues touched-on in the Kyodan statement.

KYODAN WOMEN TO MEET IN TOKYO ON MAY 5

Twenty-five hundred women, including delegates from Okinawa, Taiwan and Canada, will meet on May 5 and 6 at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo for the first National Women's Conference of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan). The convention will center on the theme, "Here I am; send me".

Sponsors of the National Women's Conference are the Kyodan's evangelism committee, women's commission and the various district women's committees of the 198,000-member denomination. Among dignitaries summoned to address the Kyodan women are Moderator Masahisa Suzuki, and Professor Masaichi Takemori of Tokyo Union Theological Seminary.

Delegates to the conference will assemble in small groups after the lectures to discuss problems of the home, education, society, government and labor.

POLICE ENTER ICU CAMPUS

Tokyo police--and an injunction issued by the Hachioji Branch of the Tokyo District Court--succeeded in forcing striking students to vacate the main building at International Christian University, Tokyo, on April 10.

The injunction, issued to enable transfer of vital university records from the strike-bound main building (see JCAN, March 17) was read to a small group of students barricaded behind chairs and steel lockers while police waited just off campus. When a demand that students stand aside to permit orderly transfer of the records met with no response, police swarmed toward the main building site. At their onslaught the students--who faced possible criminal charges for remaining in the building in obstruction of the injunction--"voluntarily left through one of the windows".

Though the evacuation of the records met with no further resistance, a group of about 80 students later participated in snake-dancing and other non-violent demonstrations on the campus. Police made six arrests on charges stemming from incidents which took place on March 15 and March 27.

The main building is now (April 15) in the hands of the University.

SPLIT IN CHRISTIAN OPINION OVER TOKYO GOVERNORSHIP

Tokyo's April 15 Governorship election saw Professor Ryokichi Minobe win over his opponent, Dr. Masatoshi Matsushita. Dr. Matsushita, ex-president of St. Paul's Rikkyo University, is a Christian.

During the campaign a deep split in Christian opinion developed over the issue of support or non-support for Mr. Matsushita's candidacy. Among individuals expressing themselves in opposition to the Christian candidate were Kyodan moderator Masahisa Suzuki and the ex-moderator, Dr. Isamu Omura.

Since the split may provoke comment abroad, JCAN chooses to outline the reasons which led some to join the struggle against the Matsushita candidacy. Two factors appear to have operated:

1) Mr. Matsushita was the candidate of political interests which fall to the center and right-of-center in the Japanese political spectrum. Many Japanese Protestants share a loyalty to the Socialist Party which is both ideological and traditional, harkening back to the role played by Christians in the party's founding. Such men, who could support Liberal Democrat Matsushita only with extreme difficulty, found it easier to swallow Minobe's Communist support because they knew that his principal strength derived from the Socialists.

2) Mr. Matsushita opposed last year's Christian efforts to avoid selection of February 11--once "Kigensetsu"--as the new "National Founders' Day". Since Church leadership fought vigorously against choice of the date once surrounded by pre-war State Shinto and militarist traditions, Mr. Matsushita's refusal to close ranks on the issue stirred widespread resentment.

NEW KYODAN HEADQUARTERS PLANNED

The United Church of Christ in Japan has announced its decision to purchase land in Kami Osaki, Shinagawa, Tokyo, for construction of a headquarters building.

Plans call for erection of a six story structure (with two sub-floors) if other denominations join the Kyodan in its new location, or a 5-story structure (with three sub-floors) if the Kyodan is to be the principal occupant.

Letters have been sent to other Japanese denominations asking for them to join in making the Shinagawa site an interchurch center. Replies are requested by June 30.

TOKYO LAWYER CHALLENGES KYODAN CONFESSION

A Tokyo lawyer has taken vigorous exception to the Easter Week "Confession" of World War II responsibility released by the Kyodan.

Writing in the columns of the Christ Weekly, Tokyo attorney Yoshio Ide termed the Kyodan Confession a "moralism" and charged that the statement ignored the difficulties of a Christian in time of war.

Mr. Ide asked whether the Confession is a confession of the leadership, or a statement on behalf of all Christians in churches belonging to the Kyodan. If it is the latter, according to Ide, the question must be answered whether Christians who dispute the statement are heretics. "It is plain", wrote Mr. Ide, "that the statement should not have been released in the name of the Kyodan but rather should have been signed by its author."

The Tokyo layman also challenged the suggestion that present Japanese policies are "turning in directions that cause one to worry again". "This is not the attitude of every Christian", Ide points out.

Moderator Suzuki indicates a reply to the Tokyo barrister's remarks will be made.

CLARIFICATION: ON "EDUCATION CRISIS" (JCAN MARCH 17)

A few readers have reacted with dismay to our comments on the implications for Christian-operated schools of Japan's crisis in higher education. We find that we were less than clear in one particular; the extent to which Government-operated institutions will help to absorb the increased number of students.

To clarify: Japanese universities, faced with record numbers of applicants, will eventually admit 450,000 students this year, up 187,000 from the 1966 totals. However, Government institutions will increase their admissions by an estimated 4000 students only, throwing the weight of responsibility for absorbing larger numbers of students upon privately-operated schools.

Beyond that, we remain of our earlier opinion.---the editors

A NOTE TO NON-KYODAN READERS IN JAPAN

Christian Activity News is painfully aware that its columns do not adequately reflect the accomplishments and activities of Japanese denominations other than the Kyodan. It would please the editors very much if JCAN's pages were filled with news from across the broad range of Japanese Protestantism, but this has not proved to be possible.

JCAN receives no advance copy from non-Kyodan groups, and little cooperation when its editors go out to ask for some.

Japan once had a prophet, Nostrabenedictus, who said, "The ecumenical spirit consisteth not in the gaseous effusion that issueth from conference halls, but in that mind among men that wills an exchange of joy and strength from day to day".

